

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions of claims in the application.

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Currently Amended) A lock assembly adapted to be detachably attached to a LAN-cable connector which is integrally fixed to a LAN cable and adapted to be removably inserted into a socket and latched at an inserted position thereof, said lock assembly being operable, when attached to the LAN-cable connector, to allow said LAN-cable connector after being inserted into said socket to be locked at said inserted position, and, when detached from said LAN-cable connector, to allow said LAN-cable connector to be removed from said socket, The lock assembly as defined in claim 1, which comprises: said lock assembly comprising:

first and second encircling members adapted to be separatably assembled together along a circumferential direction and to be attached to the LAN-cable connector in such a manner as to encircle an outer periphery of said LAN-cable connector substantially in close contact therewith;

engagement means formed in said first encircling member and adapted to, in a state after said first and second encircling members are attached to the LAN-cable connector in such a manner as to encircle the outer periphery of said LAN-cable connector, prevent said first encircling member from being moved relative to said LAN-cable connector in an axial direction of said LAN-cable connector; and

restriction means formed in said second encircling member and adapted to, in the state after said first and second encircling members are attached to the LAN-cable connector in such a

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manner as to encircle the outer periphery of said LAN-cable connector, restrict a latching-flap fixed to said LAN-cable connector from being moved in a latch-release direction.

3. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 2, wherein:

either one of said first and second encircling members is formed to cover three of four surfaces defining the outer periphery of said LAN-cable connector; and

the other encircling member is formed to cover a remaining one of the four surfaces defining the outer periphery of said LAN-cable connector.

4. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 2, wherein:

said first encircling member is formed to cover three of four surfaces defining the outer periphery of said LAN-cable connector; and

said second encircling member is formed to cover a remaining one of the four surfaces defining the outer periphery of said LAN-cable connector.

5. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 2, wherein said engagement means includes an engagement protrusion engageable with a groove formed in at least one of a plurality of surfaces of the LAN-cable connector except for one of said surfaces having said latching-flap.

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6. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 5, wherein said surface formed with said groove in the surfaces of said LAN-cable connector is located on the opposite side of said surface having said latching-flap.

7. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 2, wherein:

said latching-flap is designed to release its latching state when it is pressed down toward a surface of said LAN-cable connector having said latching-flap; and

said restriction means includes a restriction finger designed to, in the state after said first and second encircling members are attached to the LAN-cable connector in such a manner as to encircle the outer periphery of said LAN-cable connector, extend from said second encircling member to a position adjacent to an anchor end of said latching-flap so as to restrict said latching-flap from being pressingly moved downward.

8. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 2, which includes a lock adapted to be locked so as to unseparably connect said first and second encircling members to one another and to be unlocked so as to allow said first and second encircling members to be separated from one another.

9. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 8, wherein said first and second encircling members include first and second portions superimposable on one another, respectively, in the state after said first and second encircling members are attached to the LAN-cable connector in

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such a manner as to encircle the outer periphery of said LAN-cable connector, said first and second superimposable portions being formed, respectively, with first and second lock holes adapted to be aligned with one another in such a manner as to allow a lock rod of said lock to continuously penetrate therethrough.

10. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 2, which includes a special screw adapted to be attached to said first and second encircling members so as to unseparably connect said first and second encircling members to one another and to be detached from said first and second encircling members so as to allow said first and second encircling members to be separated from one another.

11. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 10, wherein said first and second encircling members include first and second portions superimposable on one another, respectively, in the state after said first and second encircling members are attached to the LAN-cable connector in such a manner as to encircle the outer periphery of said LAN-cable connector, either one of said first and second superimposable portions being formed with a loose hole for allowing an externally threaded shank of said special screw to loosely penetrate therethrough, the other superimposable portion being formed with an internally threaded hole engageable with said externally threaded shank.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A lock assembly adapted to be detachably attached to a plurality of LAN-cable connectors each of which is integrally fixed to a corresponding one of a plurality of LAN cables and adapted to be removably inserted into a corresponding one of a plurality of sockets and latched at an inserted position thereof, said lock assembly being operable, when attached to the plurality of LAN-cable connectors, to allow said plurality of LAN-cable connectors after being inserted into said corresponding sockets to be locked at said respective inserted positions, and, when detached from said plurality of LAN-cable connectors, to allow said plurality of LAN-cable connectors to be removed from said corresponding sockets, The lock assembly as defined in claim 12, which comprises: said lock assembly comprising:

first and second encircling members adapted to be separatably assembled together along an outer periphery surrounding said plurality of LAN-cable connectors and to be attached to the plurality of LAN-cable connectors in such a manner as to clamp the outer periphery surrounding said plurality of LAN-cable connectors substantially in close contact therewith;

engagement means formed in said first encircling member and adapted to, in a state after said first and second encircling members are attached to the plurality of LAN-cable connectors in such a manner as to encircle the outer periphery surrounding said plurality of LAN-cable connectors, prevent said first encircling member from being moved relative to said plurality of LAN-cable connectors in an axial direction of each of said plurality of LAN-cable connectors;
and

restriction means formed in said second encircling member and adapted to, in the state after said first and second encircling members are attached to the plurality of LAN-cable connectors in such a manner as to encircle the outer periphery surrounding said plurality of LAN-cable connectors, restrict a latching-flap fixed to each of said plurality of LAN-cable connectors from being moved in a latch-release direction.

14. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 13, wherein:

either one of said first and second encircling members is formed to cover three of four surfaces defining said outer periphery surrounding said plurality of LAN-cable connectors; and

the other encircling member is formed to cover a remaining one of the four surfaces defining said outer periphery surrounding said plurality of LAN-cable connectors.

15. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 13, wherein:

said first encircling member is formed to cover three of four surfaces defining said outer periphery surrounding said plurality of LAN-cable connectors; and

said second encircling member is formed to cover a remaining one of the four surfaces defining said outer periphery surrounding said plurality of LAN-cable connectors.

16. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 13, wherein said engagement means includes a plurality of engagement protrusions each engageable with a groove formed in at least

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one of a plurality of surfaces of a corresponding one of said plurality of LAN-cable connectors, except for one of said surfaces having said latching-flap.

17. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 16, wherein said surface formed with said groove in each of said plurality of LAN-cable connectors is located on the opposite side of said surface having said latching-flap.

18. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 13, wherein:

said latching-flap in each of the plurality of LAN-cable connectors is designed to release its latching state when it is pressed down toward a surface of said LAN-cable connector provided therewith; and

said restriction means includes a restriction finger designed to, in the state after said first and second encircling members are attached to the plurality of LAN-cable connectors in such a manner as to encircle the outer periphery surrounding said plurality of LAN-cable connector, extend from said second encircling member to a position adjacent to an anchor end of said latching-flap so as to restrict said latching-flap from being pressingly moved downward.

19. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 13, which includes a lock adapted to be locked so as to unseparably connect said first and second encircling members to one another and to be unlocked so as to allow said first and second encircling members to be separated from one another.

20. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 19, wherein said first and second encircling members include first and second portions superimposable on one another, respectively, in the state after said first and second encircling members are attached to the plurality of LAN-cable connectors in such a manner as to encircle the outer periphery surrounding said plurality of LAN-cable connectors, said first and second superimposable portions being formed, respectively, with first and second lock holes adapted to be aligned with one another in such a manner as to allow a lock rod of said lock to continuously penetrate therethrough.

21. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 13, which includes a special screw adapted to be attached to said first and second encircling members so as to unseparably connect said first and second encircling members to one another and to be detached from said first and second encircling members so as to allow said first and second encircling members to be separated from one another.

22. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 21, wherein said first and second encircling members include first and second portions superimposable on one another, respectively, in the state after said first and second encircling members are attached to the plurality of LAN-cable connectors in such a manner as to encircle the outer periphery surrounding said plurality of LAN-cable connectors, either one of said first and second superimposable portions being formed with a loose hole for allowing an externally threaded shank of said special screw to loosely penetrate

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therethrough, the other superimposable portion being formed with an internally threaded hole engageable with said externally threaded shank.

23. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 2 or 13, wherein said first and second encircling members are assembled to define four surfaces, at least one of said surfaces having distinguishing means.

24. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 23, wherein said distinguishing means includes a color sticker.

25. (Original) The lock assembly as defined in claim 2 or 13, wherein said first and second encircling members are assembled to define four surfaces, at least one of said surfaces being colored.